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SUBJECT: POLICE AND CUSTOMS OFFICIALS STRIKE FOR PROMOTIONS
AND HIGHER WAGES

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Police and Customs officials in Conakry began an unofficial labor strike on June 15. Negotiations with the government were started yesterday afternoon and continue today. There were reports of gunfire yesterday into the night from several parts of the city. Flights into Conakry yesterday evening were diverted or canceled, reportedly according to internal decisions made by the affected airlines. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) Beginning June 15, police officials in Conakry refused to go to work, seized several senior police officials as hostage, established a roadblock in the Camayenne area of the city (about a kilometer before the Castro Bridge), and fired guns into the air. Most of the so called "strike" activity appears to be organized by a special police division called the Mobile Company for Security Intervention (CMIS). Late in the afternoon on Monday, Claude Pivi "Coplan", the self-identified leader of the recent military mutiny, reportedly went to the roadblock maintained by the CMIS and demanded that the police stop firing their guns. He then offered to help them negotiate their demands with the GoG.

¶3. (SBU) Officials at the main office of the Bureau of Customs, which is located near the port of Conakry, organized a sit-down strike that also began on June 15. Customs officers showed up to work, but refused to sign any documents or process paperwork until the GoG addressed their demands. The port remains open, but business activity is reduced. An internet news source reported that Customs officials were holding the Director of Customs and her deputy hostage, but a source within Customs told Econ LES that no one was being held.

¶4. (SBU) Yesterday afternoon, two representatives from the police and one from Customs reportedly went to Camp Samory Toure to meet with President Conte and Army Chief of Staff General Camara. Negotiations are expected to continue today. Sources report that the police hostages, which included the Director General and the Deputy Director General, were released late last night. Both Customs and the police are essentially demanding the same things: promotions and rice subsidies.

¶5. (SBU) A reliable source at Conakry's central prison reported that a group of police went to the prison yesterday, fired guns into the air, and liberated 12 of their colleagues who had been imprisoned on drug charges.

¶6. (SBU) There was intermittent gunfire Monday night, in the Camayenne area as well as near Camp Alpha Yaya, which is home to Coplan and the mutineers. Embassy received several reports indicating that the mutineers were attacking police officers and demanding that they desist from strike activities. A source within Camp Alpha Yaya told Pol LES that Coplan and his mutineers had beaten up several police

officers and stolen their motorbikes.

17. (SBU) According to a police contact, two trucks of military personnel attacked the central police station in the capital district of Nongo at 02:00 this morning. The soldiers reportedly vandalized the police headquarters and freed all prisoners who were being detained there. (NOTE. Prisoners are generally held at local police stations for up to 48 hours before being transferred to a larger prison facility. END NOTE) The same contact told RSO LES that an anti-crime brigade stationed at Cosa Junction, near Camp Alpha Yaya, was arrested and disarmed by a truck of Red Berets. He noted that he had received a similar report from the central police station in the district of Matoto.

18. (SBU) Several international flights due in on Monday night were either canceled or diverted. The regularly scheduled Air France flight landed in Dakar. Although there were rumors that the police and customs had closed down the airport, contacts with the airlines report that they made unilateral decisions with respect to their flights, in consideration of an uncertain security situation on the ground.

CARTER